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ABSTRACT

The "National Inventory of Library Needs" being conducted by the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science covers public libraries, school library/media centers, and academic libraries. The resource categories being used for the Inventory are staffing, collections, acquisitions, space, and operating expenditures. For example, the need indicator identified for public library staffing is one full-time equivalent professional per 6,000 persons in the population served. The indicators represent generalized versions of detailed library standards typical of many nations and common in states of the United States. Since the indicators are minimums, a library barely meeting all of them would not necessarily be able to provide fully adequate service. The assessment of gaps nationally in the numbers of staff, in the sizes of collections and rates of acquisition of print and audiovisual materials, and in library space should highlight priority needs. The Inventory is a start toward a system of quantitative information for planning information services. (Author/PF)

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Corrected, final version,
Barbara Cranwell, Secretary,
August 2, 1976

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FOR PRESENTATION TO
COMMITTEE ON STATISTICS AND STANDARDS
INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF LIBRARY ASSOCIATIONS
AUGUST 26, 1976

THE UNITED STATES NATIONAL INVENTORY OF LIBRARY NEEDS, 1975

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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by

ALPHONSE F. TREZZA
Executive Director,
National Commission on
Libraries and Information Science

That the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS) is developing a "National Program for Library and Information Services" in the United States is well known to many of you. As one part of its continuing program planning, NCLIS is conducting a National Inventory of Library Needs. Today I wish to present to you a report on the status of that study, and a preliminary report of some of the findings.

The idea of a National Inventory to assess the current level of collections and services in United States Libraries is not a new one. The President of the American Library Association for 1964-65, Mr. Edwin Castagna, first conceived the idea of a National Inventory of Library Needs. In 1965 he sponsored the initial effort to assess the support needed to bring the library establishment of the nation up to existing standards, (which were developed by the profession) for volumes,

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professional staff, and operating expenditures. The resulting dramatic presentation of gaps in library support is credited by some observers with fueling much of the impetus which led to congressional enactment of major Federal support for the expansion of library services through amendments to the Elementary-Secondary Education Act, the Higher Education Act and the Library Services and Construction Act. A decade later, we can point to progress in many ways. But the needs have grown, too, and have become more diverse and more complex. It seemed timely to take a second reading, to assess the condition of the library establishment in similar gross terms, and to examine the apparent trends over this decade.

In the current study, we have again made an attempt to accumulate an inventory of library needs. In contrast to Castagna's '65 study, however, we have not used existing standards as our yardstick. In place of these standards, we have developed what we refer to as "Indicators of Need." While these indicators are based on, and derived from, a study of existing U.S. library "standards," minimum requirements, and "guidelines," they are not intended to be used as standards per se. In the U.S., standards for libraries have traditionally been promulgated by the professional societies. Federal agencies, such as NCLIS, may encourage and support the formulation of standards; it is not their role to define them. Moreover, there has been considerable concern expressed at the

viability of quantitative measures as valid indicators of performance in library service. Quantitative data is easier to acquire, assess and compare; they are not, however, the sole criterion on which standards for service should be based. These Indicators of Need, then, are not being promulgated as standards. They are, instead, being put forth as one group of quantitative elements by means of which current library performance can be evaluated.

WHAT "INDICATORS OF NEEDS" WILL THE INVENTORY USE?

For the purpose of national assessment of where we stand, we decided to use only measures for which (a) national data have been collected, and (b) a reasonably acceptable level of minimum adequacy can be defined. The resource input categories being used in the 1975 Inventory are Staffing, Collections, Acquisitions, Space, and Operating Expenditures. The output service category being used is Hours of Service. For comparison, the 1965 Inventory used Professional Staff, Book Collection, and Operating Expenditures. The 1975 Inventory also differs in that professional and support staff are covered separately, and for both Collections and Acquisitions, print materials and audiovisual materials will be reported separately. Thus, the 1975 volume will address nine dimensions of library resources, as compared with three in 1965.

The coverage of the Inventory by type of library includes public libraries, school library/media centers, and academic libraries, with

two-year college libraries being dealt with separately. Federal libraries, important as they are, have been excluded, because little definition of "standards" or "minimum service requirements" on which to base a meaningful comparison and summarization, exists. For special libraries, the situation is even worse, in that minimum resource requirements have not been proposed, and comprehensive data on present resources have not been collected. Special libraries therefore have also been excluded from the scope of the Inventory.

As to the specific measures, let me illustrate by describing the Indicators of Need we have identified for staffing and hours of service. In the area of professional staff, we have defined the Need Indicators as follows:

In public libraries the Need Indicator is one full time equivalent (FTE) professional per 6,000 persons in the population served.

In School library/media centers, it is one professional full time equivalent per 250 pupils or major fraction thereof, up to 500; plus one per 500 additional pupils or major fraction thereof.

For academic libraries the indicator we have defined is one FTE per 500 FTE students up to 10,000, plus one per 1,000 FTE additional students; plus one per 100,000 volumes in the collection; plus one per 5,000 additional during the year.

And for two-year college libraries we have defined the Need Indicator as three FTE's, or one per 600 FTE students, which ever is greater.

For support staff, which excludes plant operation and maintenance, the Indicator for each of these types of library is:

Two full time equivalent support staff per professional, or per professional expected by the above Indicator, whichever is greater.

For hours of service in the main library, the Indicators are:

Public libraries --	45 hours per week for population up to 25,000; 66 hours per week for population of 25,000 up.
School library/media centers --	30 hours per week.
Academic libraries	60 hours per week.

The Indicators are relatively simple. They do not exhaust the considerations important to a librarian: for example, there is no Indicator of Need for preparation of professional staff, none concerning their salaries, and none for the appropriate mix among librarians and media specialists and information scientists.

Staff, collection, acquisitions, space, and hours of service do, however, cover, within a manageable framework, the major resources which control the scope of a library's program. The sixth Indicator, operating expenditures, is of course the means by which all the other resources are provided, and it covers as well the miscellaneous quantitative elements not included in major categories. Operating expenditures is thus a "summary" Indicator.

We do not believe that meeting all of the "Indicators of Needs" of the National Inventory signifies reaching the millenium in library service. A library achieving all of them should have no cause for self-satisfaction. These Indicators are necessary but not sufficient conditions for good library service.

It might be informative to compare the illustrative indicators described above to current standards in some other countries. IFLA, as well as UNESCO and other agencies, has of course been involved with the drafting of standards for libraries for over 25 years. An increasing number of nations have approved national standards for libraries--particularly public libraries--as well.

Since most professional activity on standards internationally has been devoted to public libraries, I will limit this discussion to those standards. As you know, some national standards have the official status of governmental regulations, while other represent the advice of an advisory body, professional association or committee. They are not all, therefore, strictly comparable, but they illuminate the range of current approaches to the problem of setting standards for library service. The examples given here are taken from F.N. Withers' impressive collection of data on standards for UNESCO in 1973.

Standards relating to staff vary widely in terms of the premises upon which they are based. Most refer to non-manual staff, but some concern librarians. Standards in various countries set proportions of staff to total population, literate population, and the size of the collection.

Examples, based on 1973 data, are:

Australia:	1 staff member (1/3 professional) per 2,500 pop. served
Belgium:	1 staff member per 800 readers of 3,200 pop.
Denmark:	1 staff member per 2,000 population
German Democratic Republic:	1 staff member per 500 readers
Federal Republic of Germany:	for readers' services--1 staff member per 30,000 annual issues; for other duties--1 staff member per every 7,500 accessions
Malaysia:	1 staff member (1/4 professional) per 4,000 pop.
New Zealand:	1 staff member (1/3 professional) per 2,000 pop.
Sweden:	1 staff member per every 15,000 issues annaully (1 prof: 1.7 other staff)

Standards concerning hours of service are difficult to present here in an economical manner, since most are gradated according to size of population and type of library--that is, main libraries have a greater requirement than branch libraries.

Two examples of international standards on this topic collected by Withers are:

Federal Republic of Germany:	Main libraries--40-60 hours including Saturday; Grade I libraries, small communities, 30 hours on five days. Average branch library, 35 hours. Mobile libraries, visits weekly; stops "for a sufficient length of time."

Hungary: Sub-standard, 8 hours; basic grade, 20-24 hours at least four days; medium grade, adult 48 hours, children 30 hours; high grade, 48 hours.

This type of detailed gradated standard is also typical of the states in the United States. These standards, based largely on the proposals of the American Library Association, were greatly simplified for the different purposes of the National Inventory, as described below.

LIMITATIONS ON USE OF NEED INDICATOR

For a particular library, some of the Indicators developed by our study may be inappropriate for reasons specific to that library, so no "grading" of individual libraries is implied. However, for libraries of a given type nationally, or as a state group, the expectation is that adequate service requires at least minimum levels of each major kind of resource, related to the population served and other factors associated with the service offered. Since the "Indicators of Needs" are minimums, a library barely meeting all of the Indicators would not necessarily be able to provide fully adequate service in all respects.

Moreover, all but one of the "Indicators of Needs" are in terms of resource inputs, so they are gauges of the society's commitment of resources to the particular library services. These do not assess how good a job is being done with the resources entrusted to the library.

Finally, we must recognize that although the description of status and detection of trends provided by the Inventory will certainly be interesting and valuable to the profession, it is an overview.

Inherently, such a overview can be useful to characterize certain dimensions of the enterprise, but it necessarily omits much that is important about specific services and locations and kinds of libraries. The National Inventory's "Indicators of Needs" serves a specific limited purpose. They complement many other activities directed toward developing better knowledge of our performance as a profession, and better tools for enriching that performance.

Another emphasis deserves our attention and our commitment. The most important elements of a human service, such as ours, are not measurable. Some American libraries fear that a natural desire to "make a good showing" might lead some of our librarians to sacrifice qualitative service for the measurables which can be graphed in annual reports and cited as "meeting standards." I share the concern for keeping a proper proportion among elements of library performance, and for emphasis on the importance of the unmeasurable qualitative aspects of library service.

Keeping at the center of our concern the varied needs of library users does not, in my judgment, legitimately argue against standards or against "Indicators of Needs." Providing common

services through a public enterprise requires measures of the resources needed--measures which patrons, professionals, and public officials responsible for resource-allocations all can understand and use with discretion.

The National Commission sees and encourages the ferment of varied approaches to the many facets of evaluation and improvement of the delivery of library services in the U.S. as a positive phenomenon. While avoiding overt duplication, we must be openminded about trying multiple models and analysis plans.

BENEFITS TO BE DERIVED FROM THE NATIONAL INVENTORY

First, the Inventory will update the 1965 document. It will present the 1975 situation nationally, with respect to the nine important measures I have already described. It will trace trends since 1965 in key respects. It will indicate gaps as identified by the Indicators of Needs. The information will, so far as possible, be arranged by state, and by other significant descriptors such as size, urbanization, and type of institution, in order to facilitate their use and analysis by planners at the national and state level and by the directors and boards of individual libraries.

For the National Commission on Libraries and Information Sciences, we anticipate that the Inventory will provide a reference data base to

help illuminate the many issues which will emerge over the next several years. Without neglecting other more qualitative concerns that are important but haven't been measured, we intend to make use of the information concerning the gaps which have been identified in order to help determine strategy and activity needed to close those gaps.

Another important function of the Inventory is to provide data for the White House Conference on Libraries and Information Services, now tentatively scheduled for 1979. This major national conference, and the conferences to be held in the states in preparation for it, will have in the Inventory as a working paper, a systematic, statistical, background analysis of where we are.

The measured gaps will command attention, but the Inventory should stimulate efforts to dramatize other needs, as well. The goal of the state conferences is considered citizen deliberation of how, specifically, advanced technology, cooperative planning, and coordinated activities can contribute to developing a coherent system that will meet our recognized nationwide information needs. The Congressional Joint Resolution calling for the White House Conference pointed out that "productive recommendations for expanding access to libraries and information services will require public understanding and support."

We of NCLIS see the National Inventory as grist for the deliberations which we hope will lead to public understanding and to "recommendations for the further improvement of the Nation's libraries and information centers and their use by the public."

We hope to publish the completed National Inventory of Library Needs, 1975, by the end of this year.

PRELIMINARY AND TENTATIVE FINDINGS

At present, the findings of the National Inventory should be considered preliminary aggregates. They are based on preliminary releases of data by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) of the U.S. Government's Department of Health, Education and Welfare. They are expected, however, to be reasonably close to the final estimates.

Let me present some findings in three areas. First, in the size of the U.S. constituencies which are apparently not served by libraries. Second, I'll present trends in certain illustrative resources since 1965. Third, for a few of the key resource needs, national gaps will be estimated: the shortfall of resources actually applied as compared with the corresponding "Indicators of Needs."

People not Served

First, as to the numbers of people apparently not having access to particular types of library service;

-- For public libraries, the American Library Directory, 1974-75, includes reports of state library agencies as to the population not served by public libraries. This is not necessarily a refined estimate, since it is not clear that the agencies applied entirely consistent definitions. However, the sum of these state estimates is that 10.5 million U.S. residents do not have in-person access to library service (though some have mail service). This is almost 5% of our population of about 215 million.

-- For school library/media centers, the National Center for Educational Statistics release of January 28, 1976 shows that an estimated 74,625 public schools had library media centers in 1974, with an estimated aggregate pupil membership (October, 1974) of 43.9 millions. The total number of public schools was then 89,000. Thus, it is estimated that more than 14,000 public schools did not have a formal library/media center in the fall of 1974. The fall 1974 enrollment for public schools was 45,053,000. Thus, the number of school children in schools without library/media centers exceeds a million, or a fraction more than 2% of the school population.

Trends

Professional Staff

According to the National Inventory of Library Needs, 1965, the estimated professional staff in the three types of libraries was about 64,000. Figures are for different years, and show that:

In the public libraries there were 19,900 professional staff in 1962;

In the school libraries there were 32,900 professional staff in 1964; and

In the academic libraries there were 11,500 professional staff in 1963.

The corresponding numbers, for the 1975 report, from preliminary analysis, are:

In the public libraries there were 36,100 professional staff in 1974;

In the school library/media centers there were 62,700 professional staff in 1974; and

In the academic libraries there were 23,300 professional staff in 1975.

The increase in number of professionals is more than 90% overall in a 10-12 year period, and more than 100% in academic libraries.

Holdings of Books

The trend in bookstock may be examined in the same way, for academic and school library/media centers at this time:

The 1965 Inventory showed that there were 192 million volumes in school library/media centers; the 1975 Inventory shows that

there are 507 million. The 1965 figure, here, is for the 50,000 schools having centralized libraries serving 150 pupils or more. The 1975 figure is for the 74,625 schools recorded as having school library/media centers in 1974.

For academic libraries, the 1955 Inventory showed 228 million volumes held; the 1975 Inventory indicates this figure is now 447 million.

Over this same interval, enrollment in public schools increased by 26% and in institutions of higher education by 94% (including both degree credit and non-degree credit students). Thus, on a per capita basis, academic library book collections have increased very slightly. School library/media centers now have a substantially greater number of books per student than in 1965, but at that time the bookstock was deplorably low--quoted in the 1965 Inventory as "--less than half (45 percent) of the number needed to meet American Library Association standards (425,000,000)."

Operating Expenditures

In 1964 public library expenditure was approximately 261 million dollars; in 1974 it rose to approximately one billion, 19 million ($1,019,000) dollars. (The 1964 figure is based on a tally of 6,396 public libraries out of a total of 6,578. The 1974 figure is based on a total universe of 8,307.)

For school library/media centers, the 1964 figure is 197 million dollars; for 1974 it is one billion, 182 million ($1,182,000,000). (The figure for 1964 includes only book and professional salary expenditures.)

For academic libraries the 1964 figure for operating expenditures is approximately 229 million dollars. In 1974, this figure is one billion 57 million ($1,057,000,000).

Each of these three sectors of the library establishment now has attained billion dollar status. The increase in about ten years to more than three times the expenditure levels of the mid-sixties is partly explained by inflation, of course. But in constant dollars, U.S. local, state, and Federal governments together have increased the annual commitment of funds to these library activities by well over 100% over the decade.

Unfortunately, the trend in expenditures apparently has been interrupted since these 1974 figures, as the result of the severe fiscal crisis in many American municipalities. (Public libraries and school library/media centers are funded predominately by local jurisdictions in the United States.) Similar financial hardships have occured in many American institutions of higher education.

Expectations

The dramatic changes from 1965 to 1975 stem in some part from increases in the clientele to be served, but the total United States population grew only about 10% during the

decade. Far more important are the larger per capita expectations, probably due to the combination of growth in patronage (the percent of the population actually using libraries), and rising intensity of use per patron, corresponding to the rapid expansion in materials available. The annual growth in books published, increases in number of technical journals, and the emergence of film and recordings as a coordinate body of library materials, are all responses to reader demand/interests and stimulus thereto. This continuing phenomenon has meant that professional librarians in each of these types of service have had to seriously reconsider guidelines for providing adequate service.

For illustration, let us compare the National Inventory of Library Needs, 1965 "standards" with the "Indicators of Needs" for the 1975 Inventory for collections (somewhat simplified).

	1965 "Standard" (some detail omitted)	1975 "Indicator"
Public Library		
Collection of Print Materials	Min. 10,000 vols.; 2/capita	10,000 or 3/capita
Collection of Audio-visual Materials	a/	Roughly 1 per 10 pupils
School Library/Media Centers		
Collection of Print Materials	Min. 6,000 vols.; 10/pupil	10,000 or 20/pupil
Collection of Audio-visual Materials	a/	10,000 or 20/pupil
Academic Libraries		
Collection of Print Materials	50,000 vols. for up to 600 FTE; plus 10,000 per 200 FTE added	85,000 plus 100 per FTE faculty plus 15 per FTE student, plus allowance for fields taught. b/
Collection of Audio-visual Materials	a/	

a/ No standard suggested in 1965.

b/ Indicator for Academic Libraries is combined.

Our expectations in terms of collection size include a new dimension: audio-visual materials. And for print materials, expected collection size is roughly 50% greater in public libraries, nearly 100% for school library/media centers, and increased substantially for academic libraries as a result of the factors mentioned above.

1975 Gaps

Book Collections

Preliminary estimates of gaps in bookstock, based on aggregate data presented by NCES in preliminary releases are as follows, for public libraries and school library/media centers.

We found that the approximate "need" in public libraries is 561 million books. The current collection size is 338 million. Thus, there is a gap of 173 million books.

In school library/media centers, the approximate "need" was determined to be 878 million books. Currently, the collection size is 507 million. Thus, in this category, the gap is 371 million books.

These two types of libraries fall short of the needed bookstock by more than one-third, in the aggregate.

Gap in Support Staff. Public Libraries

For public libraries in the United States, the indicated need for support staff, as a preliminary estimate, is about 71,500.

In contrast, the preliminary NCES release for the 1974 survey of public libraries shows 43,500 technical, clerical, and other support staff, on a full-time equivalent basis. The gap is almost 40% of the indicated need, suggesting that in many public libraries professional staff time must be used for essential support activities, with an inevitable adverse effect on the level of public service.

USES OF A NATIONAL INVENTORY IN NATIONAL PLANNING

I would like to suggest some of the ways in which we plan to use the Inventory to promote and assist the process of planning. The need for ongoing planning for the development of institutions and services has been widely recognized internationally. In the information field this is underscored by general agreement on the importance of planning in the areas of system development and interlibrary cooperation, (through networks or other kinds of links between different types as well as geographically separated libraries) in order to provide adequate service. Obviously this type of cooperative emphasis requires coordinated planning efforts.

The initial step in planning is to define clearly the areas of need--the gaps between current practice and the desired goal. Naturally, quantification of these gaps requires both measurement and yardsticks against which to measure. In the United States, the National Inventory seeks to supply an initial set of these yardsticks, against the backdrop of the goals and objectives presented in the National Program of NCLIS.

The assessment of "gaps" or shortfalls, nationally, in the numbers of staff, in the sizes of collections and rates of acquisition of print and audio-visual materials, and in library space, will highlight priority needs. The magnitudes, changes over time, comparisons among states and among libraries, all will help us to devise means for meeting the needs, and for recognizing special priorities which may require urgent measures. The means for improving service will include careful attention to optimum utilization of the resources the library has--which we sometimes fail to achieve because of such problems as imbalances in the operational pattern. However, in all candor, it is unlikely that the gaps can be significantly diminished by such measures; rather, greater financial support for library services will be the primary strategy for attaining improved library services.

And I am convinced that the provision of greater financial support is a function of public recognition of the problem, to which the Inventory and similar projects can contribute. The advocates of improved library service can cite national "Indicators" and can show that some "peer libraries" are supported at the "indicated" levels. These provide some a priori credibility for specific proposals which then must be positively justified in terms of visible user benefits and citizen support.

Heretofore the library profession in general, and planning bodies like NCLIS, have relied on the subjective impressions and the particular experiences of professional librarians, administrators, and, recently, information scientists, to formulate what needs to be done to increase access to information. Most of us agree, however, that such a casual approach to preparing for the future is no longer tenable. We need more systematic planning data that is both comprehensive and longitudinal in scope.

The present Inventory, of course, is modest in its goals; but it is a start toward a system of quantitative information for planning information services.

Let me end with a quote from William Thomson, Lord Kelvin:

> "When you can measure what you are speaking about, and express it in numbers, you know something about it; but when you cannot measure it, when you cannot express it in numbers, your knowledge is of a meager and unsatisfactory kind; it may be the beginning of knowledge, but you have scarcely, in your thoughts, advanced to the stage of science."